

The April 18, 2016 FMAC (Finfish Management Advisory Committee) meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. The minutes from the March 17, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously. Staff gave a brief presentation on the update of the Cobia recreational season. Many members from the public spoke and the many people felt that the committee should vote to not comply with the federal closure of the cobia fishery. Reasons to not comply included: the closure would be an extreme hardship on the charter boat industry and many seafood businesses; large amount of potential catch and release mortality; and, Virginia is already one of the strictest states in regards to cobia. The committee, staff, and the public discussed various vessel and size limit options and the potential implementation of a cobia recreational landing permit and requirements to report harvest in order to obtain the permit the following year (this has already been approved by FMAC in the past). Mr. Jack Austin stated that since there is no question that Virginia harvested over their quota last year, it is the management committee's job to address this problem and make reasonable recommendations for the commission, not simply recommend to not comply. Mr. Skip Feller proposed a motion that starting at the end of the federal season for 2016 only, in state waters, a one fish per person limit or a three fish vessel limit, maximum would be implemented and that there would be a 37 inch minimum size total length limit with one of the three fish 50 inches or greater for the vessel. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scott MacDonald. The motion passed with four in favor and three against. The meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.